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Abstract: In this article we venture to elucidate the origin of the Albanian subjunctive marker *të-*. We contend that this marker is historically linked to a morphosyntactic device which is traditionally described as linking article and which licenses nominal syntactic units as constituents of larger syntactic units. Based on the observation that there is a substantial distributional, functional and semantic overlap between nonfinite verbal forms marked with *të-* and finite subjunctive predicates, we propose that the subjunctive marker spread across host classes from nominals to nonfinite predicates and to finite subjunctive predicates. The spread into the finite verbal domain is areally fostered, while the licensing device itself is an independent Albanian development that possibly picks up a vertical, Indo-European signal.

Keywords: Albanian, subjunctive marker, syntactic licensing, linking article, Balkan *sprachbund*

1 The Albanian subjunctive marker *të-*

As a rule, Standard Albanian makes use of a formative *të-* to mark subjunctives. Beyond independent uses in wishes, directives and the like (e.g. Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 134), the subjunctive is most typically used in complex verbal constructions, i.e. constructions consisting of two finite predicates, in particular with phasal (1) and modal verbs (same subject in 2a, different subjects in 2b).¹

1 Hyphenation of *e-/i-/të-/së-* in the examples is part of our analysis and indicates the prefixal status of this marker; this does not conform to contemporary standard Albanian orthography.

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With respect to the semantic characteristics of the first and the morphosyntactic properties of the second predicate within this construction, the pattern is strikingly parallel across Balkan languages (despite some differences in detail, see Friedman 1988 for an overview). In contrast, the elements linking the two predicates are of diverse origin (Fiedler 2004b: 366). The marker *na* in Modern Greek, for instance, derives from the subordinative conjunction *ἵνα* (*hína*) in Ancient Greek, which introduces purpose clauses. Balkan Romance *să/si* originates from a clausal subordinator as well, but with somewhat different semantic properties, namely Latin *sī*(*c*) ‘if; so (that)’ (cf. Fiedler 1987: 62; Maiden 2016: 111; Dindelegan 2016: 14–18).² The origin of the Balkan Slavic marker *da*, which also serves as a subordinator in purposive clauses, is controversial (cf. Fiedler 1987: 62; for a short overview of hypotheses that have been proposed see Wiemer 2017: 325–326).

The source of Albanian *të-* has not yet been convincingly accounted for (cf. Schumacher and Matzinger 2013: 56, fn. 39; Matzinger 2006: 131, fn. 475; Fiedler 1987: 62; Demiraj 1986: 876). Evidently, *të-* is connected to the IE demonstrative stem **to-* by root etymology. The construction, however, from which *të-* grammaticalised into a subjunctive marker remains obscure and there is no evidence for a self-contained demonstrative *të* in the documented history of Albanian. Schumacher and Matzinger (2013: 56, fn. 39) suggest that it went through a complementiser stage, very much akin to the Modern German complementiser *dass* ‘that’, but again, there is no evidence for a complementiser *të* in the attested history of Albanian (cf. also the discussion in Joseph 2016: 268–277).

In what follows, we would like to elaborate a suggestion that draws on material from attested Albanian without speculating too much about constructions in the distant past that one might posit or not. We propose that the key to the origins of the Albanian subjunctive marker and to its usage in the double-finite construction lies in the more recent history of Albanian itself. This development presumably took place under the influence of historically palpable areal convergence processes as witnessed by the data in Table 1.

A key piece of evidence for the assumption of the subjunctive *të-* resulting from a recent language-internal development, enhanced by particular areal stimuli, comes from the fact that a marker *të-* appears in the nominal domain as well. Here, it is part of the paradigm of the linking article³ *e-/i-/të-/së-* which is most prominently used in adnominal modification by means of adjectives, N(P)s, and relative clauses (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 198–201). In addition, it attaches

² Interestingly, both carry non-assertive force, cf. below, Section 3.3.

³ Throughout this paper, we use “article” in the grammatographic sense of its Latin source *articulus*, a calque of Greek ἄρθρον (*árthron*) ‘joint; connecting word’.

to the nonfinite verbal form and derives stems with nominal properties. Crucially, these *të*-marked nominalised nonfinite verbal forms share distributional contexts with *të*-marked finite forms, i.e. subjunctives. Also, *e-/i-/të-/së-* exhibits the same function in all those contexts: it licenses the lexical or phrasal units it attaches to as constituents of larger constructions. Based on these observations, we suggest a common origin of these three types of usages of *të-* (adnominal modification, deverbal derivation, subjunctive), which – attaching to the left of phrases (NP) and lexical items (adjectives, finite and nonfinite verbal forms) – can be described as prefix. This is consistently indicated by hyphenation in the examples and glosses of this article (see footnote 1).

In his treatment of adjective and genitival attribution in Albanian, Rießler (2016: 139–141; partly based on Himmelmann [1997], as for nominalisation, on Li and Thompson [1981: 575]) convincingly argues that the Albanian prefixal article is best analysed as a licenser of constituency. By “licencing of constituency” Rießler understands the syntactic licensing of a constituent as part of a larger syntactic unit. He discusses the licensing of constituency mainly in the context of nominalisation, i.e. the licensing of a verbal constituent, such as a verb, a verb phrase, a sentence, or a portion of a sentence as, e.g., an adjectival modifier or nominal argument (Rießler 2016: 51). As we will argue, the Albanian licenser of constituency *e-/i-/të-/së-* also combines with finite, i.e. non-nominalised, verbal forms, meaning that in Albanian, syntactic elements may be morphologically marked in order to be able to become a constituent of a larger syntactic unit, irrespective of their nominal/verbal and finite/nonfinite nature.⁴

As for diachrony, we assume that the subjunctive marker *të-* spread from the original nominal domain via the verbal substantive into the finite verbal domain. From a cross-linguistic, areal perspective, this ties in with the long-standing insight that the structural convergences found in the Balkan linguistic league (here: the subjunctive prefix) draw on language-specific material (here: the linking article) that is already available for different purposes.

The paper is structured as follows: in Section 2, we show that *e-/i-/të-/së-* appears with finite and nonfinite verbs in a series of syntactically identical and functionally equivalent contexts. In Section 3, we substantiate the claim that the subjunctive marker is transferred from the *e-/i-/të-/së-* article paradigm. To this aim, a concise general overview of the functions of the formative *e-/i-/të-/së-* will

⁴ Therefore, while we follow and expand Rießler’s analysis, we will not use his gloss NMLZ (nominaliser) when glossing *e-/i-/të-/së-*, but rather opt for the more general term LC (short for *licenser of constituency*), which we think is even more appropriate to capture the function of this element.

be provided. We discuss a possible historical scenario in Section 4, and a summary follows in Section 5.

2 Distributional contexts of finite and nonfinite predicates marked with *e-/i-/të-/së-*

As is well established, the formative *e-/i-/të-/së-* derives nominal forms from the so-called participle (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 86–88), the only and morphologically invariable nonfinite verbal form available in Albanian. In other words, *e-/i-/të-/së-* makes the nonfinite forms available for being used in nominal distributions. This can be seen in (3): when combined with the nonfinite verbal form *dash-ur-* (from *dash-* ‘love’), *e-/i-/të-/së-* either selects a participant involved in the event (type B nominalisation in Comrie and Thompson 2007), or the event itself (type A nominalisation in Comrie and Thompson 2007). In the former case, it turns the uninflected nonfinite verbal form *dashur* into a nominal form that has the distribution of an adjective (3a) or a noun (3b) and spells out agreement features of the element it attaches to. The marking with the neuter *të-*, as in (4), turns the nonfinite verbal form *dashur* into an event noun.⁵

- 3a *i-dashur-i* *armik*
 LC.NOM.SG.M.DEF-love.NONFIN(M)-NOM.SG.M.DEF enemy(M).SG
 ‘the beloved enemy’ (Zëri, 2013.02.25)
- 3b *shpresojmë që ndarja nga*
 hope.PRS.1PL that separation.NOM.SG.F.DEF from
i-dashur-i /
 LC.NOM.SG.M.DEF-love.NONFIN-NOM.SG.M
e-dashur-a *juaj të-kalojë s*
 LC.NOM.SG.F-love.NONFIN-NOM.SG.F.DEF your LC-pass.PRS.SUBJ.3SG
a më-lehtë
 as GRAD-easy
 ‘We hope that the separation from your lover(M/F) will take place in a more easy way.’ (Zëri, 2013.04.07)

⁵ The examples in this article represent the major diatopic varieties except for the diaspora. Unless indicated otherwise, examples are taken from the Albanian National Corpus (Morozova, 2018).

- 4 *nuk ndjen nevojë për*
 NEG feel.PRS.3SG need.ACC.SG.INDF for
 të-dashur
 LC.ACC.SG.NT-love.NONFIN.ACC.SG.NT
 ‘She doesn’t feel the need for(/to) love.’

What has not yet been systematically highlighted thus far is that nonfinite predicates marked with *e-/i-/të-/së-* share important distributional properties with finite predicates preceded by *të-*, i.e. subjunctive predicates.⁶ In what follows, we discuss four prominent cases of such contexts.

In (5), an example from the Arvanitic dialect, the preposition *për* (*për* in standard orthography) ‘for’ combines both with a finite (5a) and a nonfinite (5b) predicate, which are both preceded by *të-*. That is, the subjunctive may appear in the same syntactic context as the event nominalisation, i.e. the nonfinite verbal form marked with the prefix *të-*.

- 5a *të-vəf sakájna për*
 SUBJ-put_on.PRS.SUBJ.2SG coat.ACC.SG for
 [*të-mós-ftóhef*]
 SUBJ-NEG-catch_cold.PRS.SUBJ.2SG
 ‘Put on a coat in order not to catch a cold!’
 (Sasse 1991: 393)
- 5b *atá újətə já për [të-pírə]*
 this water is for LC-drink.NONFIN
 ‘this water is for drinking’
 (Sasse 1991: 406)

Cases like (5a) are usually discussed under the heading of “infinitive loss”, that is, the replacement of nonfinite by finite, i.e. subjunctive, constructions; cases like (5b) are traditionally labelled as “so-called infinitive” (e.g. Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 180), i.e. equivalent to an (SAE) “infinitive.”⁷

Similarly, the *të*-marked nonfinite form that singles out a participant involved in the event may be used in the same syntactic contexts as

⁶ As for *për* + *të*, Joseph (1983: 89) lists five contexts in which both *për* + *të* + NONFIN and *të* + SUBJ may be used, concluding that both overlap “in function to a large degree”.

⁷ That finite and nonfinite predicates, both prefixed with *të-*, are possible substitutes for the “infinitive” is well known since the early days of Albanian grammarography. Meyer (1888: 40) for instance gives the “periphrasis of the infinitive” (“Umschreibung des Infinitiv”) as one of the major functions of the subjunctive.

subjunctives. This is shown in (6b). Here *të-vdekur* ‘dead (M.PL)’, the nominalised s argument of *vdes* ‘die’, functions as complement of *më-mirë* ‘better’, just like the subjunctive *të-dish* in (6a).

- 6a *më-mirë* [*të-dish*] *se* [*të-kesh*]
 GRAD-good SUBJ-know.PRS.SUBJ.2SG than SUBJ-have.PRS.SUBJ.2SG
 ‘It is better to know than to have.’ (lit. ‘It is better you know than you have.’)
- 6b *më-mirë* [*të-vdekur*] *se* [*të-jetojmë* *në*]
 GRAD-good LC.M.PL-die.NONFIN.M.PL than SUBJ-live.PRS.SUBJ.1PL in
mjerim]
 misery.ACC.SG.INDF
 ‘It is better to be dead than to (lit.: we) live in misery.’
 (Zëri, 2013.06.06)

Finite subjunctives with *të-* and nonfinite constructions with *e-/i-/të-/së-* share yet another distributional context. Both occur as arguments of predicates in subject and object function, cf. (7a) (subject) and (8a) (object; cf. Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 509–513, 513–515). Syntactically, the *të*-marked subjunctive clauses may be substituted with nonfinite event or participant nominalisations prefixed with the LC *e-/i-/të-/së-* ([7b] vs. [7c] and [8b] vs. [8c]).

- 7a [subj. *Të-dish* *të-zotërosh* *një*]
 SUBJ-know.SUBJ.2SG SUBJ-master.PRS.SUBJ.2SG INDF
makinë *të-tillë*]
 machine.ACC.SG.F.INDF LC.ACC.SG.F.INDF-such.SG.F
i-u-duk *një* *gjë*
 DAT.SG-PASS-seem INDF thing.NOM.SG.F.INDEF
e-madhë
 LC.NOM.SG.F.INDEF-good.SG.F
 ‘To know how to master such a machine seemed to be a big thing to him.’
 (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 559)
- 7b [subj. *Të-ngushëlluarit* *është*]
 LC.NT-condole.NONFIN.NOM.SG.NT.DEF be.PRS.3SG
gjëja *më-e-vështirë*
 thing.NOM.SG.F.DEF GRAD-LC.NOM.SG.F-difficult.SG.F
për njeriun.
 for man.ACC.SG.M.DEF
 ‘The offering of condolences is the most difficult thing for humans.’
 (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 211)

- 7c [subj. *i-dashur-i*
 LC.NOM.SG.M-love.NONFIN-NOM.SG.M.DEF
i-Jessica Simpson, *Eric Johnson,*]
 LC.NOM.SG.M.DEF-J. Simpson Eric Johnson
i-bëri *një propozim*
 DAT.SG-make.AOR.3SG INDF proposal.ACC.SG.F.INDF
 ‘the lover of Jessica Simpson, Eric Johnson, made her a proposal’
 (Zëri, 2013.09.24)
- 8a *Kam* *dëgjuar* [obj. *nënë*
 have.PRS.1SG hear.NONFIN mother(F).ACC.SG.DEF
të-flasë *kështu*]
 SUBJ-speak.PRS.SUBJ.3SG thus
 ‘I heard the mother speaking thus.’
 (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 513)
- 8b *Ndeju* [obj. *një* *të-sëmbuar*
 feel.AOR.3SG INDF LC.NT.ACC-ache.NONFIN.ACC.SG.NT.INDF
të-fortë *në trup*]
 LC.ACC.SG.INDF-strong.SG in body
 ‘He felt an intense pain in his body.’
 (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 211)
- 8c *ka ditur* ... *t-i-ringjallë*
 has know.NONFIN SUBJ-DAT.PL-revive.PRS.SUBJ.3SG
 [obj. *të-vdekur-it*]
 LC.PL-die.NONFIN-ACC.PL.M.DEF
 ‘he knew ... to revive the dead ones’
 (Zëri, 2013.05.11)

A fourth context of syntactic substitutability is provided by double-finite phasal constructions (cf. [1]). Here, the second finite predicate may be substituted by a verbal substantive, namely the so-called “secondary infinitive”, i.e. constructions of the type *së-bëri*, which historically corresponds to the indefinite ablative of the verbal substantive (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 69, 223).⁸ As Morozova (2015) points out, in Gheg dialects the *së-bëri* construction may substitute finite subjunctives in constructions with phasal verbs, cf. the fully parallel constructions in (9).

⁸ Except for its usage in this specific fossilised construction, *së-* has been replaced by *të-* in contemporary standard Albanian (see Morozova 2015 for a note on the diachrony, semantics and dialectal distribution of this construction).

- 9a *ka filluar së-punuari*
 have.PRS.3SG start.NONFIN LC.ABL.SG-work.NONFIN.ABL.SG.INDF
 ‘he has started to work’
 (Koha ditore, 2012.04.05)
- 9b *ka filluar të-punojë*
 have.PRS.3SG start.NONFIN SUBJ-work.PRS.SUBJ.3SG
 ‘he has started to work’
 (Koha.mk, 2012.08.03)

In sum, finite predicates headed by *të-* share distributional properties with non-finite predicates that are marked with *e-/i-/të-/së-* and, most importantly, are mutually substitutable. We take the overlapping distribution to indicate that the subjunctive marker *të-* and the *e-/i-/të-/së-* linking article share a common origin in the sense that the subjunctive marker *të-* historically corresponds to the neuter form *të-* of the linking article, which is also used for deverbal event nouns. While the formal proximity between the neuter form of the linking article and the formative involved in nonfinite predicates has been pointed out in the literature (e.g. Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 210), the connection to the subjunctive marker has not yet been stated explicitly.

In order to substantiate the claim that the subjunctive marker *të-* corresponds to the neuter form of the *e-/i-/të-/së-* article paradigm, it needs to be shown that in addition to the shared distributional properties, this marker also covers overlapping functional domains in both nominal and verbal construction types. To this aim, a concise general overview of the functions of the prefixal article *e-/i-/të-/së-* will be provided in the following section.

3 Functional properties of *e-/i-/të-/së-*

In this section, we discuss the functional properties the prefixal article displays with its different hosts. We will argue that they are in line with the more general capacity of the prefixal article to license constituency in the sense defined in Section 1, and that it is exactly this function that unifies the usage of *të-* in the nominal and nonfinite domain with its function as a subjunctive marker.

3.1 Nominals

As has been pointed out in Section 1, *e-/i-/të-/së-* is most prominently used in adnominal modification. More precisely, it attaches to the left of adjectives

(3.1.1), substantives/NPs (3.1.2), and pronouns (3.1.3) and thereby syntactically licenses them as constituents in larger syntactic units. As target of head-driven agreement, the prefix *e-/i-/të-/së-* copies agreement values of the head.

3.1.1 Adjectives

In order to become a constituent of a noun phrase or a predicate, a lexically and morphologically defined open subclass of adjectives, traditionally called article adjectives, is marked with the LC prefix and with an inflecting suffix.⁹ Both combine to form a circumfix as in (10a) (adjective attribute) and (10b) (adjective predicate).

- 10a *lojë-ra-t* *e-mir-a*
 play(F)-ACC.PL-DEF LC.ACC.PL.F.DEF-good-PL.F
 ‘the good plays’
 (Zëri, 2013.09.07)
- 10b *Agim-i* *është* *i-sjellshëm*
 Agim-NOM.SG.M.DEF be.PRS.3SG LC.NOM.SG.M-polite.M.SG
 ‘Agim is polite.’
 (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 341)

The prefix always selects the adjective stem as its host and no element may intervene, i.e. circumfix and stem form a morphosyntactically inseparable unit. Accordingly, modifiers (11a) and complements (11b) of adjectives cannot be placed between the prefix and the stem.

- 11a *dikur* *i-famshëm*
 formerly LC.NOM.SG.M-famous.SG.M
 ‘formerly famous’
 (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 340)
- 11b *i-madh* *me trup*
 LC.NOM.SG.M-big.SG.M with body
 ‘tall’
 (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 340)

⁹ If used without prefix and suffix, they function as adverbs.

When used as a substantive, the circumfixed adjective keeps this morphological make-up and encodes the semantic values of its referent both on the prefix and the suffix (cf. *i-madh-i* in [12]).

- 12 (Question:) ‘Where are your sons?’ (Answer:)
i-madh-i *është* *vrarë* *në Drenicë*
 NOM.SG.M.DEF-big-NOM.SG.M.DEF is die.NONFIN in Drenicë
 ‘The older one was killed in Drenicë.’
 (Rexhep Ferri, *Njeriu, po kush tjetër*)

3.1.2 Nouns

LC marking is involved in the licensing of genitival NPs as modifying constituents, cf. (13a) (possessor noun) and (13b) (non-possessor noun). Differently from its application to adjectives, LC marking here applies at the phrasal level, i.e. attaches to the left edge of the modifying phrase ([N LC-[NP]]). This can be seen in (13c), where the indefinite pronoun *ndonjë* is placed between the prefix and the head *shkrimtari*.

- 13a *blusa* *e*-[_{NP}] *Florës*]
 blouse.NOM.SG.F.DEF LC.NOM.SG.F.DEF Flora.GEN.SG.F.DEF
 ‘Flora’s blouse’
 (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 222)
- 13b *vera* *e*-[_{NP}] *Francës*]
 wine.NOM.SG.F.DEF LC.NOM.SG.F.DEF France.GEN.SG.F.DEF
 ‘the wine from France’
 (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 221)
- 13c *veprat* *e*-[_{NP}] *ndonjë shkrimtari*]
 work(F).NOM.PL.DEF LC.NOM.PL.F.DEF some author.GEN.SG.M.INDF
 ‘the works of some author’
 (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 228)

As with adjectives, LC agreement is head-driven. This is shown in (14), where *e-shkuar-a* ‘the past’, a feminine deverbal noun derived by means of the LC prefix, modifies another noun: the phrase level LC *e-* agrees with *ruajtëse*, the syntactic head to its left. The lexical LC *së-* on the other hand agrees in gender, number, and case with *-shkuar-*, the nonfinite verb form it nominalises (see also [19] below).

- 14 *ruajtëse* *e*-[_{NP}
 guard.NOM.SG.F.INDF LC.NOM.SG.F.INDF-
së-shkuar-ës]
 LC.GEN.SG.F.DEF-go.NONFIN(F)-GEN.SG.DEF
 ‘a guard of the past’
 (Zëri, 2013.08.15)

Modifying nouns may be stripped of their heads. With genitival modifiers, this frequently happens with heads meaning ‘people, inhabitants’, or the like. In (15), *t-Shipnis* ‘the ones from Albania’ resumes *shiptart e-Shipnis* ‘the Albanian people from Albania’, which immediately precedes it. Here, the prefix *t(ë)*- alone encodes the grammatical and semantic features of its referent (i.e. the Albanians from Albania).

- 15 [_{NP} *shiptart* *e*-[*Shipnis*¹⁰]],
 Albanian(M).NOM.PL.DEF LC.NOM.PL.M.DEF Albania(F).GEN.SG.DEF
po si [_{NP} *t-Shipnis*] *si*
 but as NOM.PL.M.DEF-Albania(F).GEN.SG.DEF as
t-mi-t
 NOM.PL.M.DEF-POSS.1SG-NOM.PL.DEF
 ‘the Albanians of Albania – well, as the ones from Albania so (are) mine
 (from Kosova)’
 (<http://dialects.albanianlanguage.net/KS/117ks.htm> at 5:10 min.)

3.1.3 Pronouns

As illustrated in (16), *e-/i-/të-/së-* marks third person possessors as constituents (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 287–288).

- 16 *skuadra* *e-tij*
 team.NOM.SG.F.DEF LC.NOM.SG.F.DEF-POSS.3SG
 ‘his team’
 (Koha.mk, 2012.01.05)

¹⁰ For the different paradigms of the linking article in Standard Albanian and their usage conditions, see Buchholz and Fiedler (1987: 201).

Furthermore, relative pronouns are derived from the interrogative pronoun *cil-* ‘which’ by means of *e-/i-/të-/së-* (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 300–302).¹¹ This is shown in (17) with the relative pronoun *i-cil-i* in the nominative. Very much like adjectival modifiers, the relative pronoun has circumfixing morphology and copies the agreement values gender and number (SG.M) of its antecedent (*shkrim* in [17]); the nominative case of the relative pronoun is governed by the syntactic relation within the relative clause. (18) is a case of possessum-relativisation. Being prefixed by the phrase level LC *i-*, the relative pronoun is marked as modifier of *emri*. The circumfix *së- ... -ës* is assigned case (GEN) by its function within the relative clause (modifier of *emri*), while it agrees in number and gender (SG.F) with the head *Peron* outside the clause. Thereby the whole structure is marked as modifying *Peron*.

- 17 [NP *një shkrim*] [RC *i cil-i*
INDF article(M).ACC.SG.INDEF LC.NOM.SG.M-REL-NOM.SG.M
do t-a-trondit Madridin]]
FUT LC-ACC.SG-shock.AOR.3SG Madrid.ACC.SG.DEF
'an article that will shock Madrid'
(Zëri, 2013.07.12)
- 18 [NP *Peron*] [RC *emri i plotë*
Peron(F) name.NOM.SG.M.DEF LC.NOM.SG.M.DEF-full.SG.M
i-[së cil-ës] është
NOM.SG.M.DEF LC.GEN.SG.F-REL-GEN.SG.F be.PRS.3SG
Maria Estela Martinez de Peron]]
'Peron, whose full name is Maria Estela Martinez de Peron'
(Gazeta Shqiptare, 2007.01.14)

Together, the LC prefix and the pronominal stem *-cil-* license a clause as constituent of an NP.

3.2 Nonfinite predicates

As was already illustrated above (e.g. [5b]), *e-/i-/të-/së-* prefixes to nonfinite verbal forms (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 210–111; Meyer 1888: 43; Hetzer 1995: 29). Analogously to adjectives, it obligatorily co-occurs with suffixal inflecting

11 Albanian also has an invariant relativiser *që*, which is, however, restricted to the relativisation of S and A (rarely G) arguments, cf. Buchholz and Fiedler (1987: 301).

morphology on the stem (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 345–346). Being LC-marked, these nonfinite forms acquire nominal properties such as specification for gender, case, and definiteness and are licensed as constituents in more complex syntactic units. In (19a) for example, the nonfinite verbal form *folur* from *flas* ‘speak’ is circumfixed with the neutral LC prefix *të-* and the corresponding suffixal inflectional morphology. Thereby, it is licensed as an NP head. The NP headed by *të-folur-it* in turn receives the phrase level LC marker *e-*, which agrees with *mënyra* in case, gender, number, and definiteness (NOM.F.SG.DEF) and is thereby licensed as nominal complement of *mënyra*.

In (19b), a [P [NP]] structure, the feminine derivative *të-folur-ën* is the head of the NP that is the nominal complement to the preposition *në*. According to the case frame of *në*, it displays ACC case marking on the circumfixing elements *të-* and *-ën*.

- 19a *amënyra* *e-*[_{NP}
 manner.NOM.SG.F.DEF LC.NOM.SG.F.DEF-
të-folur-it]
 LC.GEN.SG.NT-speak.NONFIN-GEN.SG.NT.DEF
 ‘the manner of speaking’
 (Zëri, 2013.05.05)
- 19b *futur* *në* [_{NP} *të-folur-ën*
 immersed in LC.ACC.SG.F.DEF-speak.NONFIN-ACC.SG.F.DEF
 [*e-tij*]]
 LC.ACC.SG.F.DEF-POSS.3SG.M
 ‘immersed in his speech’
 (*Gjenerali i ushtrisë së vdekur*, Ismail Kadare)

As mentioned above (cf. [3]), the prefix *e-/i-/të-/së-* is also involved in deriving participant nominalisations. This is shown in (20) (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 344), where *e-/i-/të-/së-* is prefixed to the nonfinite stem *-vdekur-* (from *vdes* ‘dies’) and licenses the s argument of the predicate as a constituent of a larger syntactic unit (direct object NP, also coindexed on the verb by the *-i-*). As with the nouns in (19) above, prefix and stem are inseparable and the prefix combines with suffixal inflection, thus forming a circumfix (*të-vdekur-it*).

- 20 *ka* *ditur* ... *t-i-ringjallë*
 have.PRS.3SG know.NONFIN SUBJ-ACC.PL-revive.PRS.SUBJ.3SG
 [_{NP} *të-vdekur-it*]
 LC.ACC.PL.M-die.NONFIN-ACC.PL.M.DEF
 ‘he knew ... to revive the dead ones’
 (Zëri, 2013.05.11)

In sum, circumfixing adjectives, genitival substantives, 3rd person possessive pronouns, and relative pronouns need to be licensed as constituents by the prefix *e-/i-/të-/së-* when used in larger syntactic units. In exactly the same way, nonfinite verbal forms are equally marked by a circumfix involving the prefix *e-/i-/të-/së-* in order to be used as a constituent within NPs, be it as a head or as a modifier. Table 2 provides a summary of what has been elaborated so far in this section.

Table 2: Syntactic contexts and functions of LC.

unit marked with LC	larger syntactic unit the LC licenses for	function	example
adjective	NP	adnominal modification	(10a)
	predicate	nominal predicate	(10b)
genitival substantive	NP	adnominal modification	(13)
relative pronoun	NP	adnominal clausal modification	(17), (18)
3rd p. poss. pronoun	NP	adnominal modification	(16)
nonfinite predicate	predication	argument (head of NP)	(6b), (7b), (20)
	predicate	nominal predicate	(10b)
	PP	complement (head of NP)	(4), (5b), (19b)
	NP	adnominal (adjective) modification	(3a)

So far we have illustrated that the common function of *e-/i-/të-/së-* when applied to nominal and nonfinite verbal forms consists in their licensing as constituents of larger syntactic units. In the next section, it will be shown that this function is characteristic of *të-* also when prefixed to finite predicates, i.e. when forming the subjunctive.

3.3 Finite predicates

As has been shown in Sections 1 and 2, finite predicates headed by the subjunctive marker *të-* may, *inter alia*, occur as second finite predicates in double-finite predicate constructions (2), as clausal arguments ([6] and [7a]) and complements (8a), and as complements to prepositions (5a).

It is a common feature of all these units *të*-marked subjunctives occur in that they are constituents of larger syntactic structures. Given that this is precisely

the function that *e-/i-/të-/së-* displays with nominal and nonfinite hosts, it can safely be assumed that it is the prefix *të-* that turns finite predicates into constituents of larger syntactic units, too (cf. Tables 2 and 3).

Table 3: Functions of finite predicates with *të*.

unit marked with LC	larger syntactic unit the LC licenses for	function	example
finite predicate	predication	argument/complement	(7a), (8a), (21a)
	PP	complement	(5a)
	adjective	complement	(6a)
	double-finite predicate	2nd predicate	(2)

Direct evidence for the relevance of constituency in the use of *të* in subjunctives comes from older Albanian sources. In Buzuku’s and Bogdani’s work, the use of *të-* in the subjunctive is not compulsory in two cases (Fiedler 2004a: 408–413, 2004b: 369; Arapi 2010: 28–32). First, when negated, the subjunctive takes the modal negator *mos* (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 172), and in the presence of this negator, *të-* may be left out.¹² The second case is even more remarkable, as *të-*less subjunctives with positive polarity are restricted to the syntactically independent uses in main clauses briefly mentioned in Section 1, i.e. to units that are *not* constituents of larger syntactic units. According to Arapi (2010: 32), modern Albanian has given up *të-*less non-negated subjunctives, but still has the option to leave out *të-* in the presence of *mos* (see also Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 119, fn. 63). In our view, the fact that contemporary Albanian no longer exhibits *të-*less subjunctive forms in main clauses shows that this formative has become an obligatory part of the subjunctive verbal complex.

The semantic correlate to the function of constituency licensing with finite predicates consists in the lacking ability for subjunctives to introduce assertive content, which is usually associated with finite predicates. This has been noted in the context of ‘irrealis’/‘modal’ complement clauses (as opposed to ‘indicative’ ones; see Joseph 2016), in which subjunctive complements, e.g. to verbs of perception, do not describe a proposition but a state of affairs, i.e. a “‘non-truth-valued’ meaning unit” (Kehayov and Boye 2016: 812), see the contrast between (21a) (state of affairs) and (21b) (proposition):

¹² Note that *mos* is also used as negator in nonfinite, sc. dependent, constructions.

- 21a *dëgjojmë të-thuhet gjithandej*
 hear.PRS.1PL SUBJ-say.PRS.PASS.SUBJ.3SG everywhere
 ‘we hear this being said / to be said everywhere’
 (lit.: ‘we hear that (this) is said everywhere’)
 (Gazeta Shqiptare, 2007.01.09)
- 21b *dëgjojmë se u-dogj një shtëpi*
 hear.PRS.1PL that PASS-burn.AOR.3SG a house
 ‘we hear that a house was burnt down’
 (Koha.mk, 2011.11.03)

While this is a clearly different – albeit related – topic, the same principle can be observed with double finite predicates as well: the prefix *të-* marks the finite verb it attaches to as denoting non-assertive content, as lexically modifying the phasal or modal first predicate from which it inherits aspectual and modal specification (see also Friedman 1988). Also on semantic grounds, both predicates thus constitute a complex unit.

In terms of morphosyntax, finite and some nonfinite predicates headed by the LC, in particular *për të*-constructions, behave alike. In both, the licenser *të-* is placed at the left edge of a morphosyntactic unit and the verbal stem occupies the right edge. Direct and indirect object markers and the diathesis marker *-u-* are, if present, inserted between *të-* and the verbal stem. This common configuration is shown in (22a) (finite) and (22b) (nonfinite) for the direct object marker, and in (23a) (finite) and (23b) (nonfinite) for the passive marker.

- 22a *dikush fillon t-i-eliminojë*
 someone start.PRS.IND.3SG LC-ACC.PL-eliminate.PRS.SUBJ.3SG
ata
 DEM.ACC.PL.M
 ‘someone starts to eliminate them’
 (Koha.mk, 2012.06.13)
- 22b *për t-i-shkruar tregimet*
 for LC-ACC.PL-write.NONFIN.ACC.SG story.ACC.PL.DEF
 ‘for writing theses stories’
 (Zëri, 2013.06.14)
- 23a *kjo punë mund t-u-bëka*
 this.NOM.SG.F work.NOM.SG.F can.PRS.3SG LC-PASS-make.PRS.ADM.3SG
 ‘this work can be done’
 (Gazeta Shqiptare, 2006.12.01)

- 23b *por ka ende për t-u-bërë*
 but have.PRS.3SG still for LC-PASS-make.NONFIN.ACC.SG
 ‘but it has still to be done’
 (Zëri, 2013.10.04)

The major difference between the two constructions relates to parameters of finiteness, namely argument and TAM coding: the verb in the finite constructions in (22a) and (23a) references s/A arguments by means of suffixes and encodes tense, aspect, and mood categories, whereas the nonfinite construction in (22b) and (23b) lacks all of these specifications.

In sum, the distributional, functional, semantic as well as morphosyntactic equivalences between the subjunctive marker *të-* and the article *e-/i-/të-/së-* strongly support the assumption that the subjunctive marker originates from the article. We propose that in this process the verbal substantive exerted a catalysing function by providing a bridging context between the nominal and the verbal domain.¹³

The potential scenario of this spread across domains will be spelled out in the next section based on historical and areal evidence.

4 Historical and areal account

In the absence of data prior to the mid-sixteenth century, a diachronic account has to rely on indirect evidence. Amending the synchronic linguistic factors outlined in the previous sections by conditions found in the areal context of the Balkan league and vertical Indo-European signals allows us to propose a diachronic scenario based on the triangulation of three kinds of evidence.

The crucial contribution of the verbal substantive in the spread of *të-* has been pointed out in Section 3. Additional evidence for the catalysing role of the verbal substantive comes from argument coding.

Direct object encoding with non-lexicalised deverbal nouns is, as a rule, verbal in Standard Albanian. In the oldest major Albanian text (Buzuku’s missal, printed in 1555; Joseph 1983: 97), however, direct objects in constructions with *për të-* + nonfinite forms were predominantly encoded as possessors

¹³ Joseph (1983: 230) discusses the possibility of constructions like *këjo ... e fësthire për të vepëruom* ‘this (is) very difficult to do’ (Buzuku; Joseph 1983: 229) being reanalysed from *për* + [*të*-nonfinite verbal form] to *për të* + [infinitive] and the concomitant change in host selection by *të-* as potential starting point for the substitution of nonfinite/infinitival forms by finite complements.

(i.e. adnominally). In a more recent text (written by Bogdani in 1685), accusative marking of direct objects, including object prefixes, prevails (Schumacher and Matzinger 2013: 90–95). Together with the fact that in Buzuku the nonfinite form also occurred with affixal definiteness marking (Joseph 1983: 97), this can be taken as evidence that the circumfixed neuter event nouns (*të-* + nonfinite form + suffix) acquired verbal properties in the attested history of Albanian, possibly under the influence of *të*-marked finite clauses with which they share – as has been shown above – distributional and semantic properties.

As for its Indo-European pedigree, the marker *e-/i-/të-/së-* has an uncontested pronominal origin, and the etymological material can safely be traced back to pronominal **yo-/to-/so-* of the common ancestor of the Indo-European language family (Matzinger 2006; Bubeník 2009; Schumacher and Matzinger 2013).¹⁴ How exactly the Albanian linking article system developed cannot be reconstructed with certainty, but there is general agreement that it arose in the nominal domain. It is from there, we suggest, that it spread in its function as a licenser of constituency to finite subjunctive predicates.

To be more precise, we suggest that *e-/i-/të-/së-* marking first spread from adjective attribution/nominal predicates and genitival substantives to the nonfinite verbal form, e.g. *dashur* (love.NONFIN). Extending a convenient and well-entrenched operation, this provided the morphological means to mark nonfinite verbal forms as constituents in larger syntactic units, e.g. as the neuter event noun *të-dashur* ‘love’, as A (*e-/i-dashur-* ‘lover’) and P arguments (*e-/i-dashur-* ‘beloved’) in NPs. Given that LC-marked event noun nominalisations in particular share a substantial number of properties with subjunctive clauses, we presume that it is from there that LC marking spread to finite predicates.

This expansion may well have happened under the developing areal predilection for finite subordinate predicates in constructions that formerly used to select nonfinite forms. At the same time, the extension of *të-* to finite clauses met the concomitant areal pressure within the Balkan league to introduce a specific linking element between the two predicates in double-finite constructions.¹⁵ Eventually, the prefixing *të-* developed into the marker that signals subjunctive

¹⁴ As an anonymous reviewer remarks, the derivation of *së* from a form beginning with **s-* is difficult; s/he suggests **ty-* instead.

¹⁵ The fact that forms with the label “linking articles” attested in other languages from the same areal context, such as Romanian (see e.g. Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2013, vol. 1: 309–354), did not follow the same line of development does not invalidate our proposal. It is well known that areal similarities do not preclude the existence of differences in constructional sources and morphological substance. One aspect in which Albanian differs is – according to our proposal – the usage of an element stemming from the paradigm of the linking article as subjunctive marker. Actually, this is very much in line with Kopitar’s famous dictum of ‘one

mood on its own, a stage not fully reached yet in Old Albanian. Subsequently, the suffixing subjunctive morphology was given up except for the 2SG/3SG and the auxiliaries *kam* and *jam* (at least in Standard Albanian, dialects differ considerably).

While it seems uncontroversial that the transfer of *të-* to subjunctive clauses took place in Albanian proper, there are nevertheless etymological and functional links that connect *e-/i-/të-/së-* to morphosyntactic processes in remotely related Indo-European languages. These links thereby possibly hint at a procedure anchored in the Indo-European family that kept its strength in vertical transmission, a point that was already made by Bubeník (2009).

As was mentioned in Section 1, the form *i-* as part of the paradigms most certainly goes back to PIE **-yo-*. Interestingly, in many IE languages this morph is involved in morphosyntactic operations with functions that match the functional range of Albanian *e-/i-/të-/së-* surprisingly well (cf. Gonda 1954; Benveniste 1957; Seiler 1960; Haudry 1973). Besides its use as a relative pronoun (i.e. licensing clauses as modifiers), Vedic Sanskrit *yad* (NT.SG), for instance, serves as a clause level subordinator that licenses clauses as arguments (24) and adsentential modifiers (25) with a wide range of semantic functions; the Avestan cognate in (26) licenses nouns in the instrumental case as adnominal modifier.

24 *védā* [*yá* *upa-jāyate*]
 knows REL.NOM.SG.M upon-is_born
 ‘s/he knows [which is born later on]’
 (Vedic, RV 1.25.8)

25 *yád* *ud-īrata* *ājāyah*
 when up-rise.PRS.3PL competition.NOM.PL
 ‘when competitions arise’
 (Vedic, RV 1.81.3)

26 [_{NP} *haoma-* [*yō* *gauua*]]
 Haoma(M) REL.NOM.SG.M milk.INS.SG
 ‘Haoma with milk’
 (Young Avestan, cf. Hoffmann 1975–1992: 475–482)

Possibly, Vedic *ya-* is related to the suffix *-ya-*, which selects stems and inflected forms as its host and covers similar functional domains as *e-/i-/të-/së-*. For

form, three substances’ (“eine Sprachform [...], aber mit dreierley Sprachmaterie”, (Kopitar 1945 [1929]: 253)), i.e. converging patterns that may draw on different sources.

example, when suffixed to a noun, *-ya-* (glossed as NMLZ) enables the noun to be used as an attributive constituent of noun phrases with adjective properties (i.e. agreement, cf. [27]) When suffixed to verbal roots as in (28), it licenses them as arguments (nouns), adverbials (absolutives), and modifiers (deverbal adjectives).

- 27 *vraǰám* *gáv-ya-m*
 enclosure(M).ACC.SG cow-NMLZ-ACC.SG.M
 ‘enclosure of/for cows’
 (Vedic, RV 9.108.6)

- 28 *vi-cákṣ-ya-*
 around-look-NMLZ
 ‘observing, observation’
 (Vedic, RV 8.13.30)

Similar evidence from various branches of Indo-European is easy to come by, cf. the Lithuanian dialectal example in (29), which is, on the surface, astonishingly parallel to the Albanian LC construction and to the Avestan example in (26): in this NP, a suffix (*-ji*¹⁶) attaches to a case-marked modifier (*dievo*) and agrees with the head of the NP (*bitė*).

- 29 [_{NP} [*dievo-ji*] *bitė*]
 god.GEN.SG.M-NOM.SG.F bee.NOM.SG.F
 ‘bee of god’
 (Lazūnai dialect; Petrauskas and Vidugiris 1985: 8)

Clearly, all processes mentioned above are language specific, and because of the differences in morphosyntax and semantics they cannot be projected back to a single Proto-Indo-European construction in a simplistic way. Nonetheless, the intriguing similarity of the morphological material and the functions covered suggests that a common, maybe family-specific principle is at work here. The whole complex calls for a thorough investigation.

¹⁶ Note that contrary to what is sometimes claimed (e.g. Stolz 2010), this suffix is not identical with the suffix that is involved in the formation of definite long adjectives in this dialect, as Sommer (2018) convincingly shows.

5 Summary

Summing up, we suggest that the Albanian subjunctive marker *të*- ultimately developed from a polyvalent licenser of constituency. Morphosyntactically, this licenser consists of a prefix *e-/i-/të-/së*- that either attaches to the left edge of phrases (genitival nouns) or combines with a suffix to form a circumfix when it selects a lexical item as its host (nonfinite verbal form, adjective, relative and possessive pronoun). It licenses the selected host as a constituent of a larger syntactic unit. We hypothesize that in the recent history of Albanian, finite subjunctive clauses were added to the class of possible hosts of this licenser. The host class extension was made possible by the distributional, functional and semantic overlap between genuinely LC-marked nonfinite verbal forms and subjunctive clauses, a situation that was presumably fostered by the areal trend to supplant nonfinite predicates with finite subjunctive predicates.¹⁷

Our suggestion about the constructional origin of the subjunctive marker *të*- is based on three kinds of evidence: First, language internal distributional, functional, and semantic overlap between subjunctives and *e-/i-/të-/së*- marked nominals. Second, an areal trend towards replacing nonfinite predicates with finite ones which are marked as syntactically subordinated by a language-specific formative akin to the linking article *e-/i-/të-/së*-. Third, a vertical signal consisting of reconstructable morphological material for the licensing of nominal stems, verbal roots, and finite clauses as constituents of larger syntactic units. We take this converging evidence as solid basis for assuming the Albanian subjunctive marker *të*- to originate in the paradigm of the linking article.

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¹⁷ It is true, as an anonymous reviewer reminds us, that e.g. in Modern German the article and the general complementiser partly display a parallelism similar to Albanian (e.g. *er hört **das** Reden* lit. ‘he hears the speaking’ and *er hört **dass** sie reden* lit. ‘he hears that they speak’). However, the differences between the two constructional patterns both with respect to synchrony and diachrony are substantial and far-reaching, and we fail to see how such a superficial similarity forces us to automatically assume that Albanian first developed a general complementiser the way some Germanic languages did.

Abbreviations

ADM = admirative; AOR = aorist; G = third argument of a three-place predicate; GRAD = gradation marker; LC = licenser of constituency; NONFIN = nonfinite; NT = neuter; PTCL = particle; SUBJ = subjunctive.

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